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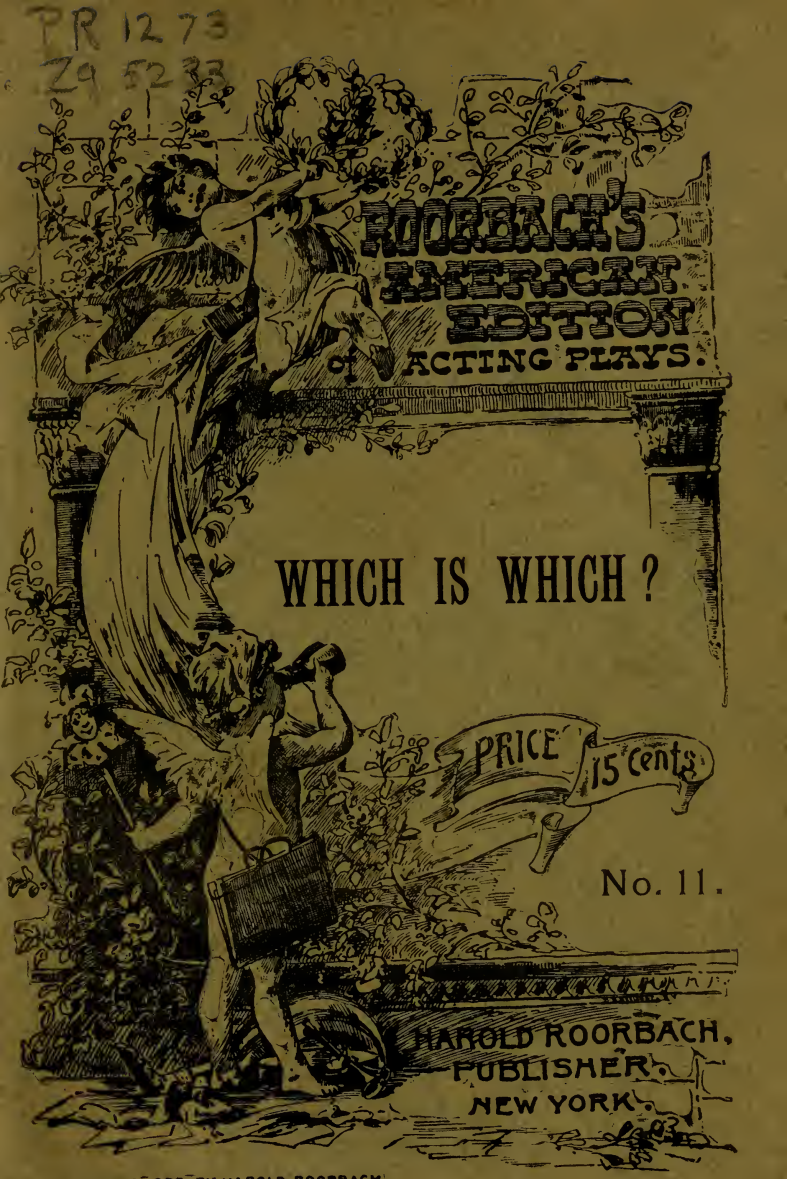


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HAROLD ROORBACH, Publisher, 9 Murray St., New York.

# WHICH IS WHICH?

## A COMEDIETTA IN ONE ACT

BY

S. THEYRE SMITH

NEW AMERICAN EDITION CORRECTLY REPRINTED FROM THE ORIGINAL AUTHORIZED ACTING EDITION, WITH THE ORIGINAL CAST OF THE CHARACTERS, SYNOPSIS OF INCIDENTS, TIME OF REPRESENTATION, DESCRIPTION OF THE COSTUMES, SCENE AND PROPERTY PLOTS, DIAGRAM OF THE STAGE SETTING, SIDES OF ENTRANCE AND EXIT, RELATIVE POSITIONS OF THE PERFORMERS, EXPLANATIONS OF THE STAGE DIRECTIONS, ETC., AND ALL OF THE STAGE BUSINESS.

'And whilst I sing Euphebia's praise,
I fix my soul on Chloe's eyes."—PRIOR.

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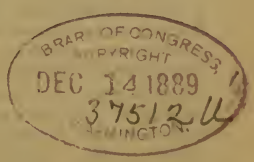


NEW YORK
HAROLD ROORBACH
PUBLISHER

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# WHICH IS WHICH?

## CAST OF CHARACTERS.

*First produced at the Royal Court Theatre, July 10, 1871.*

| | |
|---|---|
| ROBERT CAPPER (*a young Artist, much in debt*) . | Mr. Clayton, *afterwards* Mr. Belford. |
| Mr. GARGLE (*his Uncle*) . . . . . | Mr. H. Leigh. |
| PADDLES (*an Oil and Colorman*) . . . . . | Mr. C. Parry. |
| ANNIE PESTLE (*an Heiress*) . . . . . | Miss Louisa Moore, *afterwards* Miss Kate Bishop. |
| BERTHA BINGHAM (*her penniless Friend*) . . . . | Miss Bromley. |
| MRS. MILLS (*Capper's old Servant*) . . . . . | Mrs. Stephens. |

TIME OF REPRESENTATION—FIFTY MINUTES.

### SYNOPSIS OF INCIDENTS.

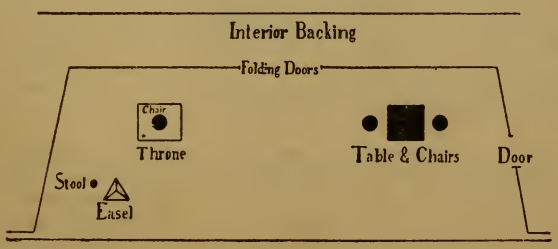
ROBERT CAPPER, an obscure young artist indebted to all the local tradesmen, is called upon during his absence, by MR. PADDLES, dealer in artists' materials, for the purpose of settling an account of long standing. He is received and put off by MRS. MILLS, CAPPER'S old servant, with a strong sense of propriety and a mania for cleaning everything but herself, who, before her master's return, contrives to work sad havoc in his studio. CAPPER returns, has some high words with MRS. MILLS, and looks at his correspondence before settling to work. Among other letters, he receives one from an old friend offering a position with good pay on a government expedition to the North Pole. While writing a letter of acceptance he is interrupted by the entrance of his uncle GARGLE, just returned from a ten years' sojourn on the continent with his ward, ANNIE. In reply to GARGLE'S inquiries concerning his nephew's health and condition, the latter reveals the extent of his embarrassment and seeks his uncle's advice. GARGLE recommends marrying an heiress and promises to send him one ostensibly to have a sketch made, in the person of his ward whom CAPPER remembers as "Puffy," his old playfellow. The young artist is enjoined to lose no time in coming to the point, as they are to leave for the north next morning. CAPPER, while hating the thought of marrying for money, suddenly remembers that he has been in love with Puffy all his life; and though perhaps unconscious of this, even to himself, for some time, yet, feeling that his love has grown like the summer grass, he con-

cludes to cut the crop, now that the time has arrived, and make hay while the sun shines. After a wordy encounter between CAPPER and MR. PADDLES who makes another vain attempt to collect his bill, ANNIE, the heiress, and BERTHA BINGHAM, her penniless friend, are ushered in by MRS. MILLS who announces "Miss Pestle" only, being informed that the one name will answer for both young ladies. Not knowing which is which, the visitors determining to keep him in the dark, MR. CAPPER finds himself in a dilemma as to which he shall tell that her image has never been effaced from his heart. He tries in vain, by all sorts of devices, to discover which is the heiress and which the poor relation, feeling that a mistake on his own part would prove ruinous. But finally having made up his mind on this point, in the course of his sketching, while resolutely uttering polite fictions to the supposed heiress, he finds himself irresistably drawn toward her companion, an attraction which he involuntarily manifests, to the delight of both girls. After BERTHA'S departure in a pretended fit of pique, CAPPER warms up, tells ANNIE frankly that he should not have known Miss Pestle from Adam, confesses his ignorance of which is which—knowing only which he should like it to be—arouses her sympathy by betraying his poverty in spite of himself, distresses her by announcing his departure for the North Pole, and so on until, finding that it is all up with him, poor relation or not, he impetuously declares that the only inducement for him to give up his wild project is that she will tell him to stay. Just as CAPPER has irretrievably committed himself, MR. GARGLE returns with BERTHA and explains that he has committed himself to the heiress, Puffy rushes to his arms, and he finds that in letting his heart run away with him, Love—disdaining thoughts of poor or rich—has led him right and whispered WHICH IS WHICH.

## COSTUMES.

CAPPER.—Picturesque négligé dress.
GARGLE.—Attire of a substantial middle aged gentleman of leisure.
PADDLES.—Business suit.
ANNIE. BERTHA. } —Walking costumes.
MRS. MILLS.—Plain dark dress, cap and apron.

## STAGE SETTING.



SCENE.—A Studio. Folding doors C. Door L. Throne R. C., with chair on it. Easel and stool R. Table and two chairs L. C.

## PROPERTIES.

Drapery thrown over chair on throne. Duster for MRS. MILLS. Picture (partly painted) on easel. Four letters for MRS. MILLS to bring on. Writing materials and bell on table. Bell (clock) outside. Painter's canvass on frame. Artist's colors, brushes, mahl stick, palette, etc. Unframed sketches, pieces of armor, one or two swords, casts, etc., about room.

## STAGE DIRECTIONS.

In observing, the player is supposed to be facing the audience. R., means right; L., left; C., centre; R. C., right of centre; L. C., left of centre; UP STAGE, toward the back; DOWN STAGE, toward the footlights.

R. R. C. C. L. C. L.

NOTE.—The text of this play is correctly reprinted from the original authorized acting edition, without change. The introductory matter has been carefully prepared by an expert and is the only part of this book protected by copyright.

# WHICH IS WHICH ?

Scene.—*An Artist's Studio. A door* L.; *folding doors at back,* C.; *a throne* R. C.; *unframed pictures and sketches all about the room; pieces of old armour, one or two swords; casts; standing on throne, chair with a piece of drapery thrown over it.*

Enter MRS. MILLS, *with a duster in her hand,* PADDLES *following, door* C.

**Mrs. M.** It's really no good your waiting, Mr.——

**Paddles.** Paddles, oil and colourman.

**Mrs. M.** Mr. Paddles, you see Mr. Capper is not come into his studio yet, and till he does he never sees nobody. You must call again.

**Paddles.** Call again, mum! call again! I do nothing but call again. I pass my whole existence calling again, like a—like a echo.

**Mrs. M.** I know nothing about echoes, Mr. Paddles. I only know it's no good your waiting here. You're interrupting me dreadful, and I so tell you. I want to get this room a little cleaner, and what chance is there of doing that as long as you're in it? Perhaps you may see him if you call later, but he don't like to be interfered with in a morning. Shall you keep him long?

**Paddles.** That's as he pleases. It don't take long to pay money, though an unconscionable long time to get it.

**Mrs. M.** Oh! then you want——

**Paddles.** I want my bill paid.

**Mrs. M.** Very well, I'll mention it to Mr. Capper. (*dusting various things in the room*)

**Paddles.** It's seven pound three and fourpence farthing, but he needn't mind the farthing, tell him.

**Mrs. M.** He won't mind the farthing, bless you! You may trust him for that.

**Paddles.** May I? I've trusted him too long for all of it, but—well, mum, I've got to go a short distance farther and I'll call as I return.

**Mrs. M.** Very good; you can do so if you like.

**Paddles.** I shall expect Mr. Capper to have the money ready for me by then, mum.

**Mrs. M.** Very well; you can expect so if you please. (*taking drapery off chair*)

**Paddles.** And if it's not ready—now mind, if it's not ready this time——

**Mrs. M.** You can call again. (*shaking it in* PADDLE'S *direction*)

**Paddles.** No, blest if I do ; I've called too often as it is.

**Mrs. M.** So Mr. Capper thinks. (*folding it up*)

**Paddles.** Coming time after time in this way is simply a nuisance.

**Mrs. M.** There ! his very words.

**Paddles.** This is the last chance I'll give him. If he don't pay to-day I'll county-court him—tell him that—I'll county-court him as sure as a gun. Exit, C.

**Mrs. M.** I'll not forget. (*proceeding with her dusting*) An ill-mannered fellow (*glancing after him*)—frightening a female by introducing fire-arms into his conversation in that way. He's a low-bred one, I know ; has no more patience with Mr. Robert, who being an artist naturally can't pay his bills, than he would with a common council man or a lord mayor. Poor Master Robert ! Oh, dear, dear ! What a state of dust everything is in. Tut, tut ! But he always was a dirty man—from a child. Dear, dear! (*turning the easel sharply round, and in so doing knocking off the picture*) There ! My goodness ! If I haven't thrown it down. (*picking it up*) Oh ! What a smudge ! Whatever will he say ? (*setting it on easel*) He'll be dreadfully angry. (*attempting to restore it with the duster*) Oh ! that only makes it worse. There goes the other eye. I'll never touch his pictures again. There ! he's coming now. What shall I,—(*turning easel with its face to the wall*)

Enter CAPPER, *door* L.

**Capper.** Now then, what have you been doing in this studio, eh ? You've never dusted it ?

**Mrs. M.** You may well say "Never dusted it," sir, indeed. It wanted it awful.

**Capper.** What ! You have ? Bless my soul ! How often have I told you to touch nothing in this room, Mills !

**Mrs. M.** (*manœuvring to keep herself between* CAPPER *and the easel*) But it was so dirty, sir !

**Capper.** Dirty ! There be off with you ! Go and flap that pestilent rag of yours in some other room than this. Be off, do ! Here ! Stop ! Confound—Where's my drapery, eh ? Where's my drapery ?

**Mrs. M.** Drapery, sir ?

**Capper.** Yes, of course. Where is it ? The dress that was on that chair, eh ? The drapery that I've been painting for the last three days in my "Venus and Adonis" picture ?

**Mrs. M.** Oh, that, sir ! I dusted it, and—(*holding it out to him*)

**Capper.** Dusted again ! Gad ! I believe you'd dust a bin of port wine, and sweep up one's ancestors. Dusted ! Why, you

sacrilegious old female, if you were to see an angel you'd pluck his wings to make a feather brush—I swear you would. Don't answer me, but be off. You'd black the sandals of the Apollo with "Day and Martin;" you'd scrub an Old Master as if you were an Academician; you'd sand-paper the Pyramids; you'd—you'd —(*she runs off*) furniture polish the multiplication table; you'd— Plague take her! Three days' work spoiled!—just my luck! An old hag with a mania for cleaning everything, except herself. (*trying to re-arrange the drapery*) Jove! yes; she's wonderfully unselfish in that respect; never thinks of herself for a moment. Pah! it's no use. Let me see, how did it come? (*turning picture round*) Strike me speechless! she has dusted Venus! I won't bear this. No, hang it! I will not bear this. Mills! (*ringing bell violently*) Mills! confound you! Mills! That woman would stick at nothing; can't keep her hands off the Immortals themselves, who, of course, have no connection with dust at all. Mills!

Enter MRS. MILLS, *delicately*, C.

Oh, here you are. Look there! Do you see? Look there! you —picture's spoiled, you know! Picture's spoiled! You've rubbed——

**Mrs. M.** Oh, if you please, sir, Mr. Paddles called this morning to say that if you didn't pay his bill in the course of the day he'd county-court you—as sure as a gun.

**Capper.** Mr. Paddles be shot! Look at this, I say.

**Mrs. M.** And I forgot to mention, sir, that the milkman said if you could conveniently settle——

**Capper.** Hang the milkman! Tell him it's not convenient—or tell him I'll settle it with the water rates when they come round. But hold your tongue and listen to me. You see what you've done. Now I won't endure it any——

**Mrs. M.** The baker's very words, sir, this blessed morning. "I won't endoor it," says he; and went on so violent, gestikylating and actually kicking his own bread basket in his anger that I shut the door in his face.

**Capper.** Then now shut the door in your own face, and let your tongue "play the fool nowhere but in 's own house," do you hear?—or——

**Mrs. M.** In fact it's the same with all the tradesmen now—as for the chimney-sweep I really don't like to meet him, he looks so black.

**Capper.** Confound the tradesmen! Dunning for money is part of their business. Look at this.

**Mrs. M.** (*turning modestly away*) You'll excuse me, sir.

**Capper.** Ah! you may well blush for it.

**Mrs. M.** Blush for it! I should think so. (*with a glance at it*) No clothes indeed! The impudent thing.

**Capper.** What do you say? Do you see?

**Mrs. M.** Yes, sir, I don't think it at all proper.

**Capper.** What?

**Mrs. M.** Painting them pictures. I think it's himmoral.

**Capper.** (*astonished*) You think it's—why, you ugly——

**Mrs. M.** I beg your pardon, Master Robert; no uglier than you are. (*angrily*)

**Capper.** Ha! ha! Why, you old fool——

**Mrs. M.** (*angrily*) What do you mean, sir? No older than you are.

**Capper.** Oh, come! and according to your own account you knew me a considerable time before I was born.

**Mrs. M.** Yes, I did—(*a sob*)—and I never thought, Master Robert—(*a sob*)—that you'd have called your old nurse a f-fool. (*weeping*)

**Capper.** (*to himself*) Ha, ha! I'm done, of course. One's certain to get the worst of it in a squabble with a woman. Here, I say, Mills! There! Never mind, I didn't mean to wound your feelings—'pon my word I didn't. But I must really begin to work. Now, keep that duster quiet; and just fetch me the letters I left on the breakfast table, will you? I've never looked at them yet. (*she goes through folding doors* C.) Ten o'clock! I must set to work, indeed; though what the dickens is the good of my painting when no one will buy my pictures? (*she returns, and hands him the letters*) Thanks! Now be off, there's a good soul.

Exit MRS. MILLS, C., *stealthily passing her duster over a table as she goes.*

One, two, three. (*turning over letters*) Gad! I shiver at letters, now; but I suppose I had better open them. (*irritably*) Confound them! They must be opened. (*on the point of opening one*) No, hang it; that is a lawyer's *billet doux*, I'll swear. We'll keep that for a *bonne bouche* at last. Here, I say, though, this one looks like a lady's hand. (*opening it hastily*) Ugh! "Per account rendered June, '67."—June, '67! What a memory they must have. I can't think how they recollect these little things such a confounded time. I'd quite forgotten it, I declare; and—and I shouldn't wonder if I forgot it again.—"With thanks for past favours." Oh, I dare say; I wish they'd discover a pleasanter way of showing their gratitude. And what is this? (*opening another*) "If the enclosed account is not settled immediately, Jorrocks, Spankdoodle, Son, and Jorrocks, will feel it necessary to put the matter into the hands of their lawyers without further delay." Gad! (*as if appalled at such ingratitude*) Men who have had my custom for years. But there we go; each step brings us lower. Now for the climax! They talked of the devil, and here no doubt he appears. (*opening third letter*) I say, what's this?

This ain't a lawyer's letter. Why, it's from Joe Graytown. (*reading it hastily*) 'Um, 'um, 'um, hallo! 'um, 'um, 'um, I say, 'um, 'um, 'um. Well, now that's uncommon jolly of him—uncommon jolly of Joe, upon my word it is. 'Um, 'um—"going as surgeon to a Government Expedition bound for the Arctic Regions on an enquiry into the character of the Flora in the immediate vicinity of the North Pole."—Umph! Queer notion. Who on earth expects to find flowers up there? Oh, Government Expedition; ah, that explains it.—"They are very hard up for an artist to accompany the expedition. Will you come? It will be a fine opportunity for observing nature under a perfectly new aspect."—Ay, no doubt, under perfectly new snow every morning.—"If you will apply or authorize me to do so, they will jump at you."—(*reflectively*) Fancy being jumped at by Government.—"Capital pay, everything found, splendid companions,"—'um, 'um—"and we shan't be away more than—four years."—(*startled*) Oh, I say!—"barring accidents."—(*aghast*) Oh, the dickens.—"We want a real sharp fellow like yourself."—(*after a pause*) He's an amusing chap, is Joe.—"Sharp as a needle since we are pointing to the north."—Ha, ha!—"It will be the very place for you, as painters always look out for a north aspect, you know."—What a facetious dog he is! 'Um, 'um.—"From yours, ever, J. Graytown. P. S. Bring heaps of white paint with you; the other colours are comparatively unimportant. PP. S. With the exception of black, of course, for it is night for nine months of every year. Reply by return as we start in a fortnight." A fortnight! Impossible! Out of the question! A fortnight to prepare for a four years' winter and possible accidents! (*getting out paper and ink*) No; if I had had rather more time to prepare I might have—— (POSTMAN'S *knock*, L.) Oh, that confounded postman again! Gad, if I went to the North Pole I should escape that pestilent postman at any rate. But four years! (*sits and writes*) "My dear Joe, a thousand thanks for thinking of me for this Arctic business, but—"

Enter MRS. MILLS, C., *with a letter—a duster in her right hand.*

**Mrs. M.** A letter, sir.

**Capper.** (*taking it*) Thanks! (*as she passes her duster over the corner of the table*) Now then; you're dusting again!

**Mrs. M.** No, I'm not, sir. What do you mean, Mr. Robert?

Exit, C., *passing her duster over a chair as she leaves.*

**Capper.** (*while opening letter*) "A thousand thanks for thinking of me for this Arctic business, but—(*his eye falls on letter—he stares—then continues writing*)—but I accept your offer without a moment's hesitation. Please make the application for me at once, and believe me—" (*as he folds and directs it*) A lawyer's letter at last, by Jove! (*calls*) Mills! Flight's my only chance! (*calls*) Mills!

*Door opens and* GARGLE **enters, C.**

Here! (*without turning*) Post this at once, will you? (*holding it out behind him and glancing at law-letter*) Well. Why don't you take it? (*turning and jumping up quickly*) You're dusting something. (*perceives* GARGLE) Oh! 'pon my word, I beg pardon—I thought it was—why, bless my soul!—am I mistaken, or—Uncle Gargle? (*tossing letter on table and going towards him*)

**Gargle.** Well, Bob, you've not forgotten me in spite of my ten years of Continental sojourn, eh? I wouldn't let her announce me, but took the liberty of walking straight up. And how are you, my boy? You look blooming enough at any rate.

**Capper.** Do I, sir? Then my appearance belies me terribly, for nothing could be seedier than my present condition. (*solemnly*) Uncle Gargle, you see before you a ruined man. I'm in the last stage of embarassment.

**Gargle.** I'm sorry to hear it, Bob. Whom do you owe this money to? Give me the history of your embarassment.

**Capper.** The history of my embarassment is a history in several books—hang it! Whom do I owe it to? All my tradesmen.

**Gargle.** Yes, yes; but what is the amount?

**Capper.** Well, sir, I—in fact, you see, a freedom from care is so necessary in the cultivation of the arts that I make it a point never to burden my mind with any troublesome details.

**Gargle.** Oh, indeed, Bob—your creditors scarcely look at the matter in the same philosophical fashion, I should say, eh?

**Capper.** Well no, sir; they write pretty regularly, to say the truth, but it doesn't answer—neither do I.

**Gargle.** Ah! and what, pray, are the assets?

**Capper.** Sir?

**Gargle.** How much can you muster to release yourself? What's the sum—in round numbers, now?

**Capper.** I can give it you in one very round number—nothing. Come, sir—(*flinging himself in a grotesque attitude into a chair*)—I wouldn't have troubled you with all this, but the fact is, something must be done to satisfy the constant demands upon me for money. I naturally turn to my nearest relative for assistance. Come, Uncle Gargle, put yourself into my position, and tell me what I must do.

**Gargle.** As to putting myself into your position, Bob, that's quite impossible for a man of my years and figure. But as regards what you are to do—Will you marry?

**Capper.** Marry! (*staring in astonishment*) Don't I tell you that I'm worried out of my life already? How can I marry without a penny to bless myself with?

**Gargle.** Has your education been so neglected, Bob, as to leave you in ignorance that there are in Natural History certain creatures called heiresses?

**Capper.** Of course not; but what heiress would be fool enough to marry me, I should like to know.

**Gargle.** Suppose I could find you one, would you marry her?

**Capper.** Would I? Like a bird, sir.

**Gargle.** Give me a distinct answer, Bob. If I find you a girl with a fortune, you will marry her?

**Capper.** Yes, I say, like a—

**Gargle.** It's not a question of likes, I tell you. You will, then?

**Capper.** Yes.

**Gargle.** (*rising*) Good; I'll send her!

**Capper.** (*aghast*) Send her! Send her where?

**Gargle.** Where! Why here, of course. (*going*) She s calling a few doors off with a Miss Bingham, a penniless young lady of her acquaintance—a poor relation, in fact.

**Capper.** (*jumping up*) No, but—I say—here! Stop! What's her name? What's she like? How old is she? Does she drop her H's? Has she nice hands and feet? Here; stop, sir! Where are you going to?

**Gargle.** It seems to me, young man, that you wish to get off your engagement.

**Capper.** Hang it! I'm not engaged yet. You're in such a——

Enter MRS. MILLS, C., *with a letter.*

Well, who's that from?

**Mrs. M.** Mr. Paddles has called again, sir; and I was to give you this. It's his account, he says, and he says he'll wait for it.

**Capper.** I know he will. What is the use of a man coming to another man's house at this time in the morning to enunciate truisms of that kind?

**Mrs. M.** But he says he can't wait any longer.

**Capper.** Very well, then show him out.

**Mrs. M.** No, but Mr. Robert, sir, he says——

**Capper.** I don't care what he says. You see I'm engaged, don't you. Get him away somehow. Tell him I'm engaged—engaged with the Governor of the Bank of England, if you like. Get rid of him somehow. Dust him out or something.

Exit MRS. MILLS, C., *after passing her duster over* GARGLE'S *hat the wrong way.*

**Gargle.** Well, Bob, what's your decision?

**Capper.** Oh, yes, sir! I'll do it. I'll marry anything in the shape of money. Only tell me her name.

**Gargle.** Name! Miss Pestle.

**Capper.** Pestle! Pestle! Why, she's your——

**Gargle.** She was left to my guardianship when very young. You must remember her, I'm sure. Miss Pestle. She has a nice for-

tune of her own, and as I take a great interest in you, Bob, I don't see why you should not have the money as well as another. Miss Pestle, recollect. (*going*)

**Capper.** I remember her, of course. I shall know her again, trust me. Little girl about that high.

**Gargle.** (*coldly*) Yes, but she's higher than that now.

**Capper.** Of course she is. Of course; Puffy, I used to call her —don't you recollect? And she used to call me Cobby. Puffy! Gad, I shall be rejoiced to see her again. Little girl, ten years old. I recollect—Ha, ha!

**Gargle.** (*severely*) But she's older than that now.

**Capper.** Ha, ha! Of course she is. Know her again! I should know her among a thousand: little short sleeves with pink ribbons in 'em, and a pink sash, and little short petticoats just down to there, and——

**Gargle.** (*angrily*) But, confound it, sir, she wears them longer than that now. Don't be a fool, Bob; let's have no false sentiment about it. You're in want of money; she has got more than she knows what to do with. That's reason enough for your marrying. (*pausing*) By the way, you had better lose no time in coming to the point, as we leave for the north to-morrow morning for a stay of three months.

**Capper.** To-morrow morning? (*aside*) And before they return I shall have left for the—North for a stay of four years. (*aloud*) But, hang it, sir, I can scarcely propose to her at the first interview.

**Gargle.** Can't you? And why not, pray? You've known her ever since she was born. What would the fellow have? You don't require a longer acquaintance than that, I suppose?

**Capper.** Well, but sir, she mayn't be as prepared to like me as I am to like her.

**Gargle.** Oh, don't you be afraid. She retained a ridiculously affectionate recollection of you; and when we were in Italy never saw a picture without wondering whether Bob could paint like that, or what Bob would give to be there; and it was Bob this and Bob that and Bob t'other, till I was sick of your very name, sir.

**Capper.** Thank you, sir; I am exceedingly sorry that——

**Gargle.** Oh! a fig for your apologies. Marry her, and I'll forgive you. I'll send for—ah! for you to make a sketch of her for me. I'll send her at once; and if I don't see you again before we leave, why—good-bye, Bob. Don't come down. Good-bye.

**Exit,** *door* L.

**Capper.** (*looking after him*) Stingy brute! Instead of behaving like a man and a brother—I mean an uncle—and ransoming me out of hand, he advises me to sell myself for good and all. I hate the thought of marrying for money. But no—hang it! this

is not marying for money. By Jove! now I come to think of it I've been in love with that girl all my life. (*affectionately*) Puffy, Puffy! I declare I have. And though perhaps I have been unconscious even to myself of this for some time, yet that proves nothing, for love

> "Grows like the summer grass, fastest by night,
> Unseen but crescive in his faculty."

And that is my case all over. My love has grown like the summer grass; so, hang it all, let's cut the crop now the time's arrived, and make hay while the sun shines; for this perpetual dunning is no longer to be borne—and as for four years in the Arctic Regions in search of an impossible Flora!—'gad, we shall spend our time in singing to the Esquimaux, "Shepherds, tell us true, have you seen your Flora pass this way." (*a knock at the door*) Come in.

Enter PADDLES, C.

Oh! Mr.—Mr. Paddles, I think. No, nothing to-day, Mr. Paddles, thank you.

**Paddles.** You mistake the purpose of my call, sir. I took the liberty of stepping up, Mr. Capper——

**Capper.** Yes, I'm glad you see the matter in its right light. It was a liberty, Mr. Paddles.

**Paddles.** I am sorry you think so, sir; but I came for my money.

**Capper.** Ah! you relieve me. I was afraid you came for mine.

**Paddles.** Money owing, allow me to remind you, sir, belongs to the creditor—not the debtor!

**Capper.** No doubt you're right. At any rate in the present instance, I can take my oath (*feeling in his pockets*) that it doesn't belong to the debtor.

**Paddles.** The money you owe me is in reality mine, and I've a right to demand it when I want it. I want it now, as I owe it to my landlord, and must pay it to-morrow morning.

**Capper.** Indeed! So this money, after all, belongs, on your own showing, to your landlord—does not belong to you at all! Now, what the dickens have I to do with your landlord?

**Paddles.** What, sir! It's no good talking. I must have this money, or I can't pay my bills!

**Capper.** Can't pay your bills?

**Paddles.** No, sir, I can't!

**Capper.** You can't! And yet you have the face to come to me and insist upon my doing what you confess your inability to do yourself! Is this reasonable now?

**Paddles.** I don't want to argue, sir.

**Capper.** Neither do I—neither do I!

**Paddles.** What I want is money!

**Capper.** So do I—most confoundedly!

**Paddles.** I want money, I repeat!

**Capper.** Exactly what I'm always repeating—but I never get it!

**Paddles.** (*violently*) But I intend to get mine before I go.

**Capper.** Ah, but the best intentions sometimes go for nothing.

**Paddles.** And if I don't——

**Capper.** Yes—I'm really curious as to the alternative.

**Paddles.** I'll put you in the Court.

**Capper.** Ah! (*rising*) Good morning!

**Paddles.** I'll put you in the Court as sure as you're born, and you ought to be ashamed of yourself.

**Capper.** Perhaps; but I was born to blush unseen, so—(*knock*) Gad! there's a knock. That must be Miss Pestle, surely. I must get him out. (*to him*) That's all settled, then. I knew that we should understand each other before we had done. This way; this way out. (*opening door* L.) You'll put me in the Court? Yes, and present me yourself, won't you? (*aside*) By Jove! there's the rustle of a dress! (*aloud*) So good of you!—come along. (Exit *with* PADDLES, L., *who is speechless with indignation*)

*As they go out by side door,* MRS. MILLS enters *through folding doors conducting* ANNIE *and* BERTHA.

**Mrs. M.** What name shall I say, please?

**Bertha.** Miss Pestle.

**Mrs. M.** Only Miss Pestle?

**Bertha.** If you say Miss Pestle it will be quite enough.

Exit MRS. MILLS, L.

**Annie.** My dear Bertha, why not say both names? He will think it so strange.

**Bertha.** What will he think strange?

**Annie.** Why finding two people here, when he only expected one.

**Bertha.** But, Annie, you surely don't suppose that Mr. Capper expects Miss Pestle to come and call upon him all by herself, do you? He'd think that strange, if you like.

**Annie.** I don't see why he should. I shouldn't if I were a man. Besides, Bertha, I believe he won't know which of us is which!

**Bertha.** Not? Oh, Annie, I've such an idea: let us try whether he will or not.

**Annie.** Try? How?

**Bertha.** Why, leave him to find it out for himself. Throw no light upon the matter at all. Let him—what do they call it?—evolve it from his own inner consciousness, you know.

**Annie.** No, no, Bertha!

**Bertha.** Yes, yes, you must, to oblige me—come, you will.

There! hark! there's a door banged. He's coming. What grand fun! Look at this picture. What is it, I wonder.

Enter CAPPER, *lightly*, L.—*He stops suddenly.*

**Capper.** (*aside*) Two of 'em! Flushed a brace, by George! Well, but—hang it all!—which is——

**Bertha.** (*the* GIRLS *have their backs to him and are looking at picture*) I think it's some one between Scylla and Charybdis.

**Capper.** (*aside*) I think it is, indeed. (*calling through door in a loud whisper*) Here, Mills! Mills!

Enter MRS. MILLS, *door* L.

**Capper.** Which is which? Which is Miss Pestle, eh?

**Mrs. M.** Don't know, sir. They said if I said Miss Pestle it would do for both.

**Capper.** Did they? By Jove, it's done for me as well. Well, but, what is the other one's name—whichever is the other?

**Mrs. M.** I can't say, sir.

**Capper.** Then you can go, Mills. (Exit MRS. MILLS, C.) Old idiot! 'Pon my word, this is excessively nasty. How the dickens am I to tell her that her image has never been effaced from my heart when I don't know her again when I see her? Well, it will be easy enough to find out. Here goes.

**Annie.** I'll tell you what I think it is: it's the Judgment of Paris —only where's Venus?

**Capper.** (*aside*) By Jove! I should be at no loss where to look for Venus. An uncommonly pretty girl. (*advancing*) Will you let me explain? (*the* GIRLS *turn and bow*—CAPPER *bows*) It is intended to illustrate the lines, "How happy could I be with either were t'other dear charmer away," and if it is a success—(*aside*)—the picture is, as the papers say, a worthy reflex of the painter's mind. (*pulls easel round slightly, and, while doing so, speaks without looking at either* GIRL) May I hope that you like it, Miss Pestle? (*listening eagerly for the answer*)

**Both.** Oh yes.

**Capper.** (*aside*) One at a time, please.

**Bertha.** It's very pretty.

**Capper.** (*aside*) This is she. (*turning to her*)

**Annie.** (*in a voice of deep admiration*) It's charming.

**Capper.** (*aside*) No, this is she. (*in a soft voice turning towards her*) And no one's praise could be so delighful as——

**Bertha.** Charming is no word for it.

**Capper.** (*aside*) Stay. I'm wrong. (*in a soft voice to* BERTHA) The labor of years is more than repaid by approval from such lips as—

**Annie.** (*pointing to another picture*) Dear me, what a lovely face! Exactly like one of Lawrence's.

**Capper.** (*aside*) H'm! First impressions are truest it seems. This is she. (*in a soft voice to* ANNIE) Do you think it so lovely? Ah, it is a reflected beauty that shines upon the picture now, and gives it—

**Bertha.** (*suddenly*) Oh, dear!

**Capper.** Eh?

**Bertha.** A Raffaelle, surely. (*pointing to another*) An original Raffaelle.

**Capper.** (*aside*) Second thoughts are best after all. This is she. (*aloud, in a soft voice to* BERTHA) Not a Raffaelle. No, "A poor thing, but mine own." You look with too favorable an eye at it. Ah! how have I longed for the moment when I might show these efforts of my brush to her—the thought of whom—

**Annie.** (*aside*) This will never do. (*aloud*) Surely, Mr. Capper, I have seen that picture somewhere? (*indicating picture*) Now, where? It is so pleasant wandering about a treasure chamber of this kind, and having the genius of the place at one's elbow ready to explain everything. Oh! it must be a delightful thing to be an artist. Is it not now?

**Capper.** (*meaningly*) Yes, *now* it is indeed.

**Bertha.** And such an artist, who is certain as possible to reach the top of the tree.

**Capper.** Well, perhaps, (*aside*) for I'm decidedly up it already.

**Annie.** (*looking round*) Such charming conceptions! (CAPPER *turns to her*)

**Bertha.** Such felicitous execution! (CAPPER *turns to her*)

**Annie.** Such beautiful color! (CAPPER *to her*)

**Bertha.** Such splendid drawing! (CAPPER *to her*)

**Annie.** Oh! it's delightful! (CAPPER *to her*)

**Bertha.** It is a privilege indeed! (CAPPER *to her*)

**Capper.** (*aside*) Well, I haven't a notion which is she. But—this is pleasant enough, but—hang it!—there's no time to lose. I must find out which of them is——

**Annie.** But that picture! It's a copy from some Old Master, I suppose. Now, where have I seen it?

**Bertha.** Wait. Somewhere abroad, I'm sure.

**Capper.** (*aside*) Now, then, if the other has not been abroad——

**Annie.** Yes, abroad somewhere.

**Capper.** (*aside*) She has, though.

**Bertha.** Stop; somewhere in Italy.

**Capper.** (*aside*) Now I have them, they've never both been to—

**Annie.** I know, Rome.

**Capper.** (*aside*) Done again. (*turns away*)

**Bertha.** I think not, dear; isn't it Florence?

**Annie.** No, love, it's Rome, I'm sure; I am as positive as I am that my name's——

**Capper.** (*aside* L., *eagerly*) What?

**Bertha.** (*quickly*) Don't be too positive, dear.

**Annie.** I appeal to Mr. Capper, then. Where is the original, Mr. Capper?

**Bertha.** Yes, where?

**Capper.** (*aside*) I have them now. (*aloud*) Ha, ha! Miss Pestle's right. Miss Pestle's right.

**Annie.** (*aside to* BERTHA) How deep of him, for I'm sure he does not know which of us it is.

**Bertha.** (*aside to her*) Not deep enough, though. (*aloud*) Gracious, was that twelve striking? We've not a moment to lose if we're to be painted.

**Capper.** Ah, yes, I understand that I am to have the honor of painting Miss Pestle.

**Bertha.** Oh, both of us.

**Annie.** Yes, both of us. Now, Mr. Capper, how will you have us?

**Capper.** (*aside*) Another chance! (*aloud*) Why, I think that if Miss Pestle were to sit down, and—and the other lady whom I have not the pleasure of knowing——

**Bertha.** Oh, of course! Dear me! How absurd!

**Capper.** Yes, ha, ha! very. (*aside*) Now for it.

**Both Girls.** Miss Bingham!

**Capper.** (*aside*) Gad!—the poor relation—a mistake now would be ruin; but—confound it. (*bowing generally*) What's to be done? They make their responses as if they were in church, all together. (*aloud*) Then if Miss—Bringem, did you say, Miss Pestle?——

**Both.** Bingham! Bingham!

**Bertha.** No R.

**Capper.** Oh! no R. (*aside, as he fetches canvas*) There again. All their replies are Greek to me—most particularly Greek, for whenever I ask a question that should clear up the mystery, they answer in the dual number—and—hang it!—I must make love to one at once—one at once! Why, of course, I can't make love to both together.

**Annie.** Now shall we get upon this thing, Mr. Capper? (*pointing to throne*)

**Capper.** Yes, mount the throne, please.

**Annie.** The throne you call it, eh? Then the Arts are not, like Literature, a Republic, it seems.

**Capper.** Most certainly not; they are a Tyranny, a Tyranny of Forty. Now, (*placing chair on throne*) if (*to* BERTHA) as I suggested before, you would sit——

**Bertha.** Eh! I?

**Capper.** Eh? Oh, no, of course it was—(*to* ANNIE)—I thought that if you would sit——

**Annie.** I now, eh?

**Capper.** (*much embarrassed*) You now, ha, ha! (*aside, turn-*

*ing away*) Confound that old Gargle for leaving me in the dark in this way. Oh, if our positions were only reversed; if I were the uncle and he the nephew, wouldn't I cut him off with a shilling! (*turning, and struck suddenly with the pretty position into which the* GIRLS *had fallen*) Oh, capital! Don't move, pray; that will do admirably. I'll just put it in as rapidly as I can on this small canvas. (*beginning to sketch*) It's a delicious position, so easy and natural.

**Bertha.** May we speak?

**Capper.** By all means. However good their position I could not expect two ladies to sit for an hour without speaking, of course.

**Bertha.** That would not be easy certainly.

**Capper.** And I'm sure it would not be natural.

**Annie.** I don't see that it would be either difficult or unnatural. Mr. Capper thinks, of course, that a woman must be talking, and can't keep a secret, and all that nonsense.

**Capper.** Pardon me! I think that a woman can keep a secret, confoundedly tight! (*aside*) When she doesn't know that it is a secret.

**Annie.** Well, I've a good mind not to open my mouth till the sitting's over, to prove it to you.

**Capper.** What! won't you answer if I ask you questions?

**Annie.** If you do, I shall answer as literally as possible; so you may begin your catechism as soon as you like.

**Capper.** (*aside*) That's a good notion. (*aloud*) Ha, ha! catechism you call it, eh? Suppose I begin regularly catechism-fashion then. What is your name? Ha, ha! (*watching eagerly*)

**Annie.** (*promptly*) N. or M.

**Bertha.** (*aside to her*) Well done.

**Capper.** (*aside*) Hang it! (*aloud*) Ha, ha! that's no answer. (*aside*) The little witch! I declare she'd puzzle an Old Bailey Lawyer. (*the* GIRLS *whisper, and smile*)

**Bertha.** Do you think I am much changed since you saw me last, Mr. Capper?

**Capper.** (*startled and staring at them*) Eh! I beg pardon.

**Bertha.** Do you think I am much altered? Should you have known your old friend again?

**Capper.** (*aside*) There, the murder's out! (*aloud*) Know you again, Miss Pestle!—(*aside*) Hang it! I wish it had been the other one. (*aloud*) Know you again! I should have known you anywhere—anywhere. (*aside*) How utterly changed she is.

**Annie.** But, like all true geniuses, Mr. Capper makes no parade of his knowledge.

**Bertha.** You've not forgotten me, then, all this long time I've been in Italy?

**Capper.** Forgotten you, Miss Pestle! I should not have forgotten

you if you had been all the time at the Antipodes. (*aside*) Never saw anybody so altered. (*aloud*) Do you think I could forget what I have had by heart for years? What makes you think so? Have my eyes played the traitors to my heart?

**Annie.** Oh, dear, no, Mr. Capper, your eyes were honest enough. They betrayed no recognition at all, I assure you. But I beg pardon, I'm afraid my talking must interrupt you sadly, Mr. Capper.

**Capper.** On the contrary, it helps me. I always get on better when I work to music. (*aside*) Hang it! Why did I not say that to the heiress?

**Bertha.** There, my dear, what are you going to do for that?

**Annie.** If Mr. Capper will let me get up, I'll make a curtsey.

**Capper.** No, no; don't move, pray—unless I'm tiring you. If you are tired——

**Annie.** I'm not at all tired, indeed. I could sit as long as you wanted me, I'm sure.

**Capper.** Then you could sit for ever. (*aside*) There I go again.

**Bertha.** (*aside*) I think I'd better get out of the way.

**Capper.** (*aside*) What a fool I am! I keep saying these things to the wrong one. I must say something pointed to Miss Pestle—something warm. (*aloud*) Did you—hem!—did you like the Sunny South, Miss Pestle?

**Bertha.** Oh yes, it was so bright and cheerful. England seems such a gloomy place after it.

**Capper.** Ah! (*aside*) Hate a woman who slights her native country. (*aloud*) I suppose that we are scarcely as well off for sunshine——

**Bertha.** Oh, the sun that you get here is not the real sun, I assure you. The true sun never leaves dear Italy. Your sunlight is merely——

**Annie.** Sunlight adulterated for importation to England, eh, my dear? Well, for my part I prefer the adulteration.

**Capper.** Ha, ha, ha! (*aside*) Give me a girl who'll stand up for her country—even to its weather. That's something like patriotism.

**Bertha.** And as if England were not bad enough, we are to go still farther north to-morrow. Oh, dear! Scotland for three months—just fancy that.

**Capper.** (*aside*) What is that to the North Pole for four years? Just fancy that. (*aloud*) Ah! you don't like Scotland?

**Bertha.** Oh no! I wish there were not such a place on the map. I should like to scratch it out, I declare.

**Capper.** Ah! but that's not to be done. If scratching would do it, the natives would have had it out long since. And do you go too, Miss Bingham?

**Annie.** Yes, Mr. Capper.

**Capper.** And with the same pleasant anticipations?

**Annie.** Oh, no, I am very fond of Scotland.

**Capper.** Happy Scotland!

**Bertha.** (*aside*) I shall retire; I'm in the way, evidently. (*aloud*) O-o-oh!

**Annie.** What is the matter, dear?

**Capper.** Are you ill, Miss Pestle? What's the matter!

**Bertha.** Oh, my—my foot's asleep; I must rise; my foot's asleep. (*rising, and limping about*)

**Annie.** But you'll spoil the picture.

**Bertha.** Oh! I can't help that.

**Capper.** Well, is the foot awake now?

**Bertha.** Oh, no, no! (*limping about*)

**Capper.** Regular case of somnambulism, then!

**Bertha.** (*coming round till she gets in sight of the picture*) Well, I never!

**Annie.** What's the matter now?

**Capper.** Eh! anything wrong!

**Bertha.** Wrong? Why, I declare, he has never done a bit of me. He has devoted himself entirely to you, and has expressed me by one—two—three lines as if I were a triangle. (ANNIE *makes a gesture of delight*)

**Capper.** I'm sure, I beg a thousand pardons——

**Bertha.** Oh, don't attempt to apologize, Mr. Capper. Three lines! Yes! Now, do I bear any resemblance to a triangle—do I?

**Annie.** Well, my dear, I think that in your present frame of mind two lines, if properly arranged, (*crosses her fingers*) would represent you very fairly without any necessity for a third.

**Bertha.** Ah, you may laugh; but if you'd been treated as if you were a proposition of Euclid, you wouldn't take it so quietly. Pray, put the letters at all my corners, Mr. Capper, and make a perfect problem of me.

**Annie.** My dear, you are a perfect problem already without the necessity for any letters. What makes you so cross? Mr. Capper must paint one at once.

**Capper.** I assure you, Miss Pestle, I was just coming to you when——

**Bertha.** Oh, of course. But it doesn't matter. If it is impossible to paint two people at once I may as well go.

**Annie.** But, my dear——

**Capper.** Nay, Miss Pestle, consider the picture, pray. Remember that I've not put you in at all.

**Annie.** (*aside*) No, but you've put her out, apparently, a great deal. (*aloud*) Then if you go, I suppose I must go too.

**Capper.** Oh no, Miss Bingham, I beg that you'll remain at any rate. Half-an-hour more will be invaluable. You've no notion what a capital position you are in.

**Bertha.** (*aside*) Neither have you. (*aloud*) There is no necessity

for you to go, my dear. I'll call for you again directly, so wait here till I come. Good morning, Mr. Capper; or rather, *au revoir* to you both. No, pray don't come down. I can see myself out perfectly well.

**Capper.** Oh, you must really permit me! (*opening door and following her out*, C.)

**Annie.** What does Bertha mean by this? She was not really angry; it was all put on. I fancy she thinks—yes, I'm sure she thinks—I know what she thinks. That is why she left so suddenly.

Re-enter CAPPER, C.

Well, has she persisted in going?

**Capper.** Yes, she departed inexorable. Put her best foot forwards, the wakeful one, and was gone. (*resuming his palette very thoughtfully*) By Jove, I was never so surprised in my life.

**Annie.** As at what?

**Capper.** Why, at Miss Pestle. I never saw any one so altered, and for the worse too.

**Annie.** Oh! Mr. Capper, she is considered very pretty. Do you mean to say you don't think so?

**Capper.** Well—nothing extraordinary.

**Annie.** Why, what would you have? Her eyes are splendid, and then what a complexion! I am sure she must be all your fancy painted her.

**Capper.** I don't know about that (*half aside*)—I suspect there was more paint laid on than ever came from fancy's palette.

**Annie.** And I should like to know where you'd see such hair as that again. Did you not notice it? It is hair that the more you look at it the more you admire it. It really grows upon you.

**Capper.** (*half aside*) Ah, but does it really grow upon her? That's the question. (*aloud*) Oh! I dare say she is all very well, but you should have seen her when she was eight or nine years old.

**Annie.** (*with affected indifference*) Was the child so pretty?

**Capper.** Pretty! she was the most perfect little angel that ever appeared was Puffy Pestle—Puffy I used to call her you know; and she used to call me Cobby—angelical for Bobby. Gad! how she is gone off. Those pretty children often do; take their beauty as they do the measles—have it young and get it over. I could not have believed it was she.

**Annie.** It was curious that you recognised her then.

**Capper.** (*consciously*) Very, very—(*frankly*) if I had recognised her; but to tell you the honest truth, Miss Bingham, I should not have known her from Adam—except for the drapery of course.

**Annie.** There! I knew you didn't. You didn't know whether she was Miss Pestle or I—did you now?

Capper. Not in the least. I only knew which I should have liked it to have been. (*aside*) I say, take care—take care.

Annie. Well, she is a sweet girl, and he will be a fortunate man who marries her.

Capper. Why, it's not so very much, is it?

Annie. Really, Mr. Capper! But the Arts must be a very lucrative profession if you can speak of her fortune in that slighting manner.

Capper. Lucrative! The Arts! Street-sweeping is coining compared to it. Ah, Miss Bingham, you don't know what a hard ungrateful life it is. Poring over a picture till you get almost colour blind: working your fingers till—till you might play the bones without the aid of other instruments than those which Nature has provided, and all for the wages of a scullery-maid.

Annie. You can't be serious, Mr. Capper! Surely, it's a noble profession. Think of the Emperor Charles picking up Titian's paint brush.

Capper. Ay, ay, but those days are gone by. Swells won't take us up now, much less our brushes. But, pray forgive me for troubling you with complaints of this kind.

Annie. (*aside*) Can he be in want of money, poor fellow? (*aloud*) They don't trouble, me, indeed, except on your account.

Capper. (*aside*) What perfect sympathy! That's just how they trouble me. Gad, if I don't keep in mind that she is a poor relation, I shall—hem! (*aloud*) You are very good; I'm sorry to hear that you are going away so soon. You leave for the North tomorrow, I think you said. Ah, I'm thinking of going to the North myself for a—hem! for a time.

Annie. Indeed! whereabouts, if it's a fair question? We are going to Perthshire. Do you go so far as that?

Capper. Yes, farther than that.

Annie. Dear me! Up to the very top?

Capper. Yes, up to the *very* top.

Annie. Oh, Mr. Capper, I envy you.

Capper. Do you? (*aside*) Well, that view of it never occurred to me before.

Annie. They say the climate is delicious up there—so bracing.

Capper. Ah! bracing, I've no doubt; but rather cold.

Annie. Oh! nothing to speak of, and then the scenery is splendid.

Capper. Of course; though there's perhaps a slight tendency to sameness of colour; but what else could be expected up there?

Annie. (*startled*) Where?

Capper. At the North Pole. (*sweetly*) Didn't I say the North Pole? Ah! I thought I did.

Annie. (*in a disturbed voice*) No, you never mentioned the North Pole. Gracious, Mr. Capper! What are you going to that dreadful place for?

Capper. (*aside*) I declare there is a tone of interest in her voice, that—oh! if she weren't a poor relation—or if I weren't.

Annie. Do tell me, Mr. Capper, what on earth takes you up there?

Capper. Well, you see, I'm going after the—in fact—Flora of——

Annie. Flora! Oh! I beg pardon. I'm afraid I have been indiscreet. But perhaps I am to congratulate you.

Capper. Quite the contrary, according to my idea. I think you misunderstood me. Our purpose is to investigate the Flora of the regions in the vicinity of the North Pole. The expedition is botanical, not matrimonial.

Annie. Botanical! (*evidently relieved*) You don't mean to say you are going to look for flowers up there. Ha, ha! What do you expect to find? Snowdrops, I suppose; and Esquimaux dog roses! Why what a set of frozen-out gardeners you will be! Does the Expedition start from Hanwell, may I ask?

Capper. Hanwell! (*with importance*) Government Expedition, I assure you; capital pay; everything found; and only away for four years or so, unless delayed by some trifling accident peculiar to those regions.

Annie. (*with real distress in her voice*) Four years! Four—what madness!

Capper. (*aside*) If she continues that tone I shall be an engaged man before five minutes are over; I shall, indeed, and that will be madness if you like.

Annie. What can induce you to go upon such a wild-goose chase as this, Mr. Capper?

Capper. (*aside*) She can't get the matrimonial notion out of her head. (*aloud*) What induces me? I'm—I'm obliged to.

Annie. Where's the necessity?

Capper. Here.

Annie. Here?

Capper. Yes; you see I've strong hopes, if I accompany this expedition, to discover a North-west passage by which to avoid—my creditors! Ha, ha!

Annie. Creditors! Then you're in debt? (*recollecting herself*) I beg a thousand pardons for——

Capper. (*impetously*) For what? For letting me feel that the most charming of her sex can take an interest in such a fellow as me. (*aside*) Now what am I saying? (*aloud*) I am most grateful for your sympathy, my dear Miss Bingham, but pray don't distress yourself for troubles of mine. I carry my poverty very easily, believe me; I distribute its inconveniences amongst my tradesmen, and so secure a fair and equal division of labour. They've felt it more than I up to the present time, I assure you.

Annie. But you don't know how grieved I am.

**Capper.** Grieved! on my account! When to shield you from the slightest sorrow I would— (*aside*) It's no good, I can't help it. Poor relation or not, it's all up with me.

**Annie.** Can nothing persuade you to give up this wild project?

**Capper.** I only know of one thing that that will.

**Annie.** And what is that?

**Capper.** You tell me to stay. (*kneeling with one knee on the throne and taking her hand—she does not answer*)

Enter MRS. MILLS, C.

**Mrs. M.** Mr. Gargle and Miss Bingham!

Enter GARGLE *and* BERTHA, C.

**Capper.** Miss Bingham! (*jumping up*) You mean Miss Pestle.

**Gargle.** Well, Bob, how have you and Miss Pestle been amusing yourself, eh?

**Capper.** Miss Pestle! you mean——

**Gargle.** Miss Bingham and I are naturally curious to know.

**Capper.** Miss Bingham! you mean——

**Gargle.** Have you found it possible to propose on a first interview eh?

**Bertha.** May I wish you joy, Miss Pestle, my dear?

**Capper.** Miss Pestle again! Why—what does this mean? Isn't that Miss—? Will no one explain?—and isn't that—? Which is which? (*to* BERTHA) Aren't you Miss Pestle? and (*to* ANNIE) aren't you—(*as a light breaks in upon him*) Bless my soul! why —Puffy! (*opening his arms*)

**Annie.** Cobby! (*embrace*)

**Capper.** By Jove, what a piece of luck! Why, if I hadn't let my heart run away with me, I should have——

Oh, happy chance, when Love and Interest strove
Which should be guide, that left the task to Love.
While Interest led, the fortune all my care,
'Twixt this and that I blundered in the snare;
But Love—disdaining thoughts of poor or rich—
Love led me right, and whispered WHICH WAS WHICH?

ANNIE. CAPPER. BERTHA. GARGLE.

R. L.

CURTAIN.

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